(e) by when the same is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Cancellation of AI's flights

†2196. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India is facing heavy paucity of aircrafts and pilots and on account of this the flights have to be cancelled off and on;

(b) if so, the No. of flights which have been cancelled by the Air India during the last six months;

(c) whether the Government have taken any steps to get over the paucity of aircrafts and pilots; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Air India has cancelled 98 flights during the last six months. However, most of these flights were cancelled due to the deluge in Mumbai caused by heavy rains.

(c) and (d) Air India and Air India Charters Limited (AICL), a subsidiary of Air India, have submitted the following Projects for fleet augmentation for approval of the Government:

(i) 18B-737-800W aircraft for AICL.

(ii) 50 new long range aircraft consisting of a mix of B777-200LR, B777-300ER and B787-8.

To overcome the shortage of pilots, following steps have been taken by the Government:—

1. Capacity of IGRUA is being increased and the training facilities being upgraded to train more pilots.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

2. Additional flying training institute is being set up by the Government at Gondia, Maharashtra.

3. Age of pilots who can operate commercial flights has been increased from 60 to 61 years.

4. Engagement of retired/foreign pilots on contract basis.

5. Air India is in the process of recruiting additional pilots to fill up the vacancies through open advertisements in leading newspapers, campus recruitment from IGRUA at frequent intervals.

Permission for air travel facility to patients

2197. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether some airlines including Indian Airlines do not encourage medical patients from flying in their planes;

(b) whether DGCA has no policy or plans to ensure that all airlines extend the maximum possible assistance to medical patients and old people;

(c) the details of private airlines which have shown a great amount of collousness and brutality in denying people a facility to travel when they are sick; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to inform, warm and caution all airlines that their should be no hurdles to sick or handicapped people from flying on any airlines they choose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Indian Airlines provides all necessary assistance to facilitate air travel of all disabled passengers including medical patients. Further, in order to ensure that all airlines (including private airlines) make arrangements for facilitating the carriage of stretcher-borne passengers by air, the Director General of Civil Aviation has issued a Civil Aviation Requirement on 15.7.2005.